

DECISION RECORD & CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

Project Name: Bunny Meadows Hill Climb Restoration (CE OR116-08-24)

BLM Office: Ashland R.A., Medford District. Phone # (541) 618-2369

DESCRIPTION & LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:

This action involves restoration of a user created four wheel drive road and hill climb adjacent to the Bunny Meadows gravel stockpile area. The 10-acre Bunny Meadows area, previously used as a gravel stockpile area, is a popular parking area for accessing Timber Mountain OHV area. The four-wheel drive road, along with approximately 200 acres in the immediate area, were closed to mechanized vehicle use in 2007 under a Temporary Emergency Area Closure due to resource degradation. The closure also prohibited OHV riding along the popular Poison Oak OHV trail. The Poison Oak OHV trail access was used by people in four-wheel drives to create the unauthorized hill climb.

The temporary closure is to remain in effect until the adverse effects giving rise to the closure are eliminated, and measures are implemented to prevent recurrence of these adverse effects. The purpose of this project is to resolve erosion and sedimentation caused by unauthorized creation of the four-wheel drive road, and install mechanisms to prevent reoccurrence of adverse effects.

The BLM proposes to rehabilitate the four-wheel drive road by mechanically smoothing ruts, constructing waterbars for water drainage, and by seeding and mulching the roadbed. Large 3-foot diameter rocks will be placed at the entrance of the jeep road to eliminate class II OHV use of the road. Ruts in the existing road would be smoothed mechanically. Water bars would be mechanically installed at 30-foot increments along the jeep road. The disturbed area would be seeded and trees (ponderosa pine and madrone) would be planted. Sterile straw would be placed over the area and woody debris and rocks would be placed on the straw to keep it in place. Temporary fences would be installed perpendicular to the jeep road to block access to the hill climb. Signs would be placed to explain the rehabilitation process and the objectives of this project. At the entry to the OHV trail, large 3-foot diameter rocks would be placed to limit access to Class III OHV's.

REQUIRED PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES:

- 1) No mechanized renovation work will occur during the wet season (October 15th to May 15) when the potential for soil erosion and water quality degradation exists. This restriction could be waived under dry conditions. All mechanized renovation activities would be stopped during a rain event of 0.2 inches or more within a 24-hour period, or soil moisture conditions exceed 20 percent by weight at a three inch depth, or if determined by the administrative officer that resource damage would occur if restoration is not halted. Mechanized restoration activities would not occur for at least 48 hours after rainfall has stopped and on approval by the BLM Administrator.
- 2) Mechanized equipment is not allowed off of the existing jeep road or Forest Creek road.
- 3) All equipment will be washed prior to entering the project work site to prevent the introduction of noxious weeds.
- 4) Population of yellow starthistle will be treated prior to completing the restoration work and will be monitored for 3 years and treated as funding permits.

The Poison Oak OHV trail, located in the closure area, will be reviewed for reopening once the rehabilitation is completed on the jeep road. A decision, as to when to reopen the Poison Oak trail, will be made by the Field Manager in a separate Decision Record & Categorical Exclusion Review, once restoration has been completed.

PLAN CONFORMANCE

The proposed action is in compliance with and is tiered to the *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP)* as amended by the *Record of Decision To Remove the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines from the Bureau of Land Management Resource Management Plans Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (USDI 2007). The 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan incorporated the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and the Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (Northwest Forest Plan) (USDA and USDI 1994).

The proposed action and alternatives are in conformance with the direction given for the management of public lands in the Medford District by the Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937 (O&C Act), Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, the Clean Water Act of 1987, Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (as amended 1986 and 1996), Clean Air Act, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

The proposed action would not create adverse environmental effects under the categorical exclusion exceptions, unless as noted. The proposed action will:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Categorical Exclusion Exception</u>
()	(X)	1. Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety.
()	(X)	2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resource; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.
()	(X)	3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)] not already decided in an approved land use plan.
()	(X)	4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks.
()	(X)	5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.
()	(X)	6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but significant cumulative environmental effects. (40 CFR 1508.7 and 1508.25(a)).
()	(X)	7. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
()	(X)	8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.
()	(X)	9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.
()	(X)	10. Have disproportionate significant adverse impacts on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).
()	(X)	11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).
()	(X)	12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

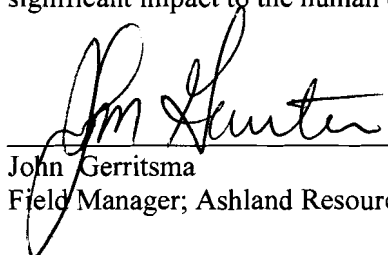
The proposed action has been reviewed against the twelve criteria listed above for an exception to a categorical exclusion and does not fall under any exception as identified in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2. The project qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 2.3A (3) and DM 11.9 C (3) and D (10).

<u>Dennis Byrd</u>	<u>Outdoor Recreation Planner</u>	<u>March 12, 2008</u>
Prepared by	Title	Date

<u>Kristi Mastrofini</u>	<u>Environmental Coordinator</u>	<u>March 22, 2008</u>
Reviewed/Edited by	Title	Date

DECISION

Based on the NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW above, I have determined that the proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under DM 11.9 C (3) and D (10), involves no significant impact to the human environment and that no further environmental analysis is required.


<u>John Gerritsma</u>
Field Manager; Ashland Resource Area

<u>5/16/08</u>
Date